

REMARKS

By this amendment, claims 1, 4, and 15 have been amended. No claims have been added or canceled.

Claims 1-20 remain pending in the application. Reconsideration and allowance of all of the claims are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

Claim 1 has been amended to clarify what the Applicant believes to be his invention. Claim 4 has been amended to now depend from claim 3. Claim 15 has been amended to correct a grammatical error. These amendments have not been made in response to a rejection made by the Examiner and no surrender of subject matter is intended thereby.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Murakami et al. The Examiner also rejected claims 8-20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Murakami et al.

The Examiner mentions in the Office Action that Murakami et al. shows a blow-off valve assembly configured to control coolant flow through an engine based on coolant pressure. This is however incorrect.

Murakami et al. use a stepper motor 23 to operate valve elements 21 and 22. The stepper motor 23 is controlled by an ECU 30. The control by the ECU 30 is made in response to signals input from the sensors 31 to 35 (see column 4, lines 50-52). Sensors 31 and 32 are coolant temperature sensors. Sensors 33 to 35 provide the operating condition of the engine 1. Sensor 33 is a rotational speed sensor, sensor 34 is an intake pressure sensor, and sensor 35 is an ignition switch. Note that although sensor 34 is a pressure sensor, it does not detect the coolant pressure. "The intake pressure sensor 34 is disposed in an intake passage (not shown) in the engine 1. The sensor 34 detects an intake pressure PM reflecting the load on the engine and outputs a signal representing a detected value thereof" (column 4, lines 27-31). Control of the valve is therefore not based on coolant pressure contrary to what the Examiner suggests.

Although Murakami et al. discloses that "the engine cooling system in the present embodiment could suppress a rise in pressure in the circulation passage immediately after the engine stop as compared with the conventional system" (column 6, lines 56-62), it also

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discloses that "if the engine is stopped and the ECU 30 determines as such, the valve 8 is always controlled by the ECU 30 to open at the predetermined opening degree" (column 6, lines 22-24). Thus, since the valve is controlled by the stepper motor to suppress a rise in pressure, it does not act as a blow-off valve.

Murakami et al. does not teach or suggest any ways in which the valve is actuated other than by the stepper motor. As such, the valve of Murakami et al. acts as a thermostat which also takes into account engine operating conditions for controlling the valve position. It does not act as a blow-off valve which opens when the coolant pressure is above a pressure threshold and which is biased to prevent coolant flow when the coolant pressure is below the threshold.

Claim 1 as amended recites a blow-off valve assembly comprising, *inter alia*, "a blow-off valve disposed in the valve body and configured to prevent coolant flow when a coolant pressure is below a threshold". As discussed above, Murakami et al. does not act as a blow-off valve and does not control the valve based on coolant pressure. Therefore, for these reasons, Murakami et al. does not anticipate claim 1.

Dependent claims 2-8 recite additional features of the invention and are therefore believed to be allowable for the same reasons recited above with respect to claim 1 and for the additional features recited therein.

Claim 9 recites an outboard motor comprising, *inter alia*, "a blow-off valve assembly disposed in a coolant passage and biased to seal the cooling passage when a pressure of the coolant is below a threshold". Even if it would be obvious to use the valve assembly of Murakami et al. in an outboard motor, and without admitting that it would be, it is respectfully submitted that for the same reasons recited above with respect to claim 1, Murakami et al. does not render claim 9 unpatentable.

Dependent claims 10-14 recite additional features of the invention and are therefore believed to be allowable for the same reasons recited above with respect to claim 9 and for the additional features recited therein.

Claim 15 recites a method of controlling temperature of an outboard marine engine comprising, *inter alia*, the step of "hydraulically opening the blow-off valve to reduce coolant pressure in the coolant system". As discussed above, Murakami et al. only discloses opening

the valve using a stepper motor. It does not teach or suggest hydraulic actuation of the valve. Therefore, Murakami et al. does not render claim 15 unpatentable.

Dependent claims 16-20 recite additional features of the invention and are therefore believed to be allowable for the same reasons recited above with respect to claim 15 and for the additional features recited therein.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the Applicant respectfully submits that all of the currently pending claims are allowable and that the entire application is in condition for allowance.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable to place the application in a better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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December 9, 2005

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